Starting Early: Addressing the Achievement and Opportunity Gaps in Cambridge

Recommendations of the Cambridge Early Childhood Task Force
Cambridge City Council/ School Committee Roundtable
November 16, 2015

Task Force Charge

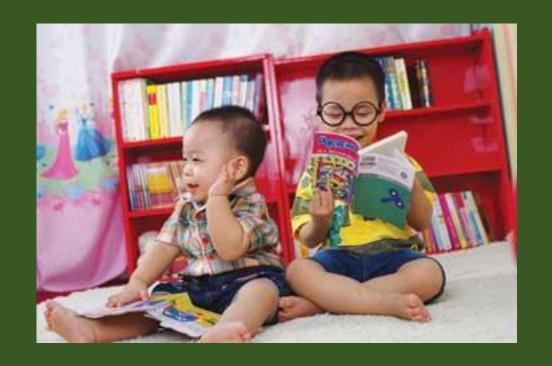
- Develop a set of recommendations to improve early education and care throughout the community, and
- Ensure that all children receive high quality early education and care beginning with prenatal care and extending through third grade.





Task Force Needs Assessment

- Reviewed research on national and state models of effective practice
- Surveyed early education and care providers in Cambridge
- Conducted focus groups with a broad range of stakeholders including practitioners and parents



Cambridge Community Input

Surveyed

68 early education and care providers

10 early childhood service providers organizations representing 41 programs

Conducted 11 focus groups representing

parents

teachers

community based pre-schools

family child care providers

family liaisons

principals

literacy ambassadors

0-8 Council





Task Force Findings

Access to Information

"It takes a while to get plugged in and know about everything that exists. You have to be aggressive to find out what exists." —Cambridge Parent

Maintaining and Improving Quality

"Quality varies from program to program."—Cambridge Family Childcare Provider

Task Force Findings

Aligning and Coordinating Services

"We need to learn more about what early childhood providers do, and they need to learn more about what we do." —Cambridge Public School Elementary School Principal

Addressing Critical Gaps

"It appears as though many of the children are coming to us needing greater support than we can sometimes accommodate."—Cambridge Preschool Teacher

Affordability and Access

"Waiting lists and costs are barriers." —Cambridge Engagement Team Outreach Worker

Task Force Priorities



Task Force Priorities

- Start Early
- Quality is Essential
- Build a Coherent Mixed-Delivery System





Access to & Affordability of High Quality Early Education and Care Services

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- Early Childhood Information
- Home Visiting



- Early Childhood Services and Quality Education
 - Birth to age 3
 - 3 & 4 year olds

Cambridge 3- and 4-year Olds *Improving Affordability and Quality*

- Additional scholarship subsidies
- Feasibility of separating all Junior K and Kindergarten classes
- Pilot Program



Program Quality



Program Quality

Build capacity to improve program quality
Create positions of Early Childhood Director and Program Quality Specialist

Develop Quality Improvement Plan

Improve transitions, collaboration & coordination



Build Family Engagement and Support Partnerships



Build Family Engagement & Support Partnerships

- Promote best practices in family engagement, building on current efforts
- Increase opportunities for family support and learning



Improve Access to Quality Healthcare Services



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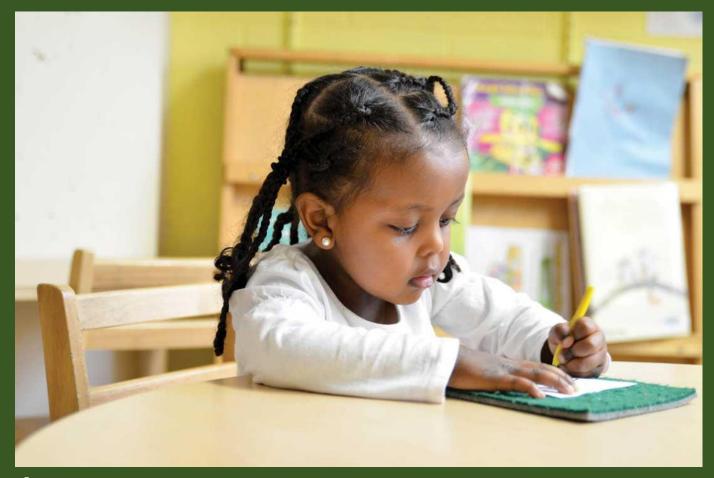
 Collaborate on improving health outcomes guided by the Cambridge Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)

Expand access to quality mental and behavioral health services

Improve Access to Quality Healthcare Services

- Enhance pre-natal and home visiting services
- Ensure access to information on healthy development for families and providers





Develop a shared governance and leadership infrastructure

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Establish Early Childhood Governance Board

 Create positions of Early Childhood Director and Program Quality Specialist

Develop strategic plan with targeted outcomes



Strengthen public awareness



Budget

	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018
TOTAL	\$190K	\$1.3M	\$2.3M
GOAL I: Affordability	\$50K	\$725K	\$1.6M
GOAL II: Program Quality	\$90K	\$390K	\$490K
GOAL III: Family Engagement		\$65K	\$150K
GOAL IV: Health Care		\$50K	\$100K
GOAL V: Governance	\$50K	\$20K	\$20K

Summary of Goals and Objectives



Guiding Principals

Whole Child Build C

Build On Strengths

Cultural Competence

Age Range

1.3 Early Childhood

Services and Quality

Education for 3- and

1.4 Early Childhood

4-Year Olds

Information

Equity and Preparation Gap

All, Some, Few

Families as Partners & Parent Choice

Goals

GOAL 1	GOAL 2	GOAL 3	GOAL 4	GOAL 5
Increase Access to and Affordability of Early Learning and Care Services	Continuously Improve Program Quality for Birth through Third Grade Services	Build Partnerships to Promote Strong Family Engagement and Support	Coordinate with Healthcare Providers to Ensure Access to Quality Healthcare Services	Develop an Effective Birth through Third Grade Governance and Leadership Structure

Objectives

1.1 Home Visiting	2.1 City-wide Pro-
	gram Quality Capacity
1.2 Early Childhood	
Service and Education	2.2 City-wide Quality
from Birth to Age 3	Improvement Plan

- 2.3 Pilot Project Lessons Learned
- **2.4** Transitions, Collaboration and Coordination
- **2.5** Provider Access to Information for Families

- **3.1** Best Practices in Family Engagement
 - **3.2** Family Participation and Advocacy
 - **3.3** Family Support and Learning
 - **3.4** Family Access to Information

- **4.1** Collaboration on Improving Health Outcomes
- **4.2** Access to Quality Mental and Behavioral Health Services
- **4.3** Birth and Home Visiting Services
- **4.4** Nutrition and Active Living
- **4.5** Access to Information on Healthy Development

- **5.1** Shared Governance and Leadership
- **5.2** Strategic Plan and Plan Management
- **5.3** Accountability: Evaluation, Data Systems and Reporting
- **5.4** Public Awareness and Practitioner Understanding